

## **Institutional Ergonomics Committee**

**February 7, 2000**

### **Meeting Minutes**

**Committee Attendees:** Ken Huff, PTLA; Gary Whitney, ESA-FM-ESH; Fran Talley, PA; Faye Miller, BUS-RM; Raeanna Sharp-Geiger, MST-OPS; Mike Brandt, ESH-5; Tina Montoya, LC; Larry Wardlow, ESH-2; Mabel Grey-Vigil X-DO; Ernesto Vigil, ESH-5/DX-DO; Carol Smith, BUS-4; Carlos Garcia, E-DO; Lawrence Quintana, APT/TPO; and Cathy Schuch, CST-DO.

**Invited Panel Guests:** Lee McAtee, ESH-DO; Dona Espinoza, BUS-RM; Sylvia, Herrera, BUS-RM; Meg Cox, ESH-13; Phill Grogan, ESH-13; Helena Whyte, ESH-5; John Vance, ESH-5; Paula Mattys, ESH-5.

**Ergonomics Community:** Ellen Castille, LC-LEL; Ken Johnson, ESH-13; Melissa Cameron, ESH-13; Rick Reynolds, ESH-13; Karen Smith, ESH-13; Nick Hoffman, ESH-13; Lynn Berrigan, ESH-13; Lezlie Morris, ESH-2.

### **Announcements**

- Carol Smith announced that the By-laws and Charter for the Institutional Ergonomics Committee was passed via e- mail.
- Committee members should identify and submit the names of alternate committee members to Mike Brandt.
- Leslie Guthrie-Puckett, ESH-5 graduate student, is developing a survey to measure whether trained employees act to reduce their exposure to ergonomic risks or hazards compared to untrained employees. This survey will be electronically distributed in March.
- Larry Wardlow, Carol Smith, and Mike Brandt met with Denny Erickson to give him an update about IEC activities. Denny expressed his support for the Committee to continue its work as an official institutional safety committee. Denny expressed support for hiring a professional ergonomist, which ESH-5 is currently handling. John Fox will serve as a facilitator during the Committee's strategic planning sessions. Denny would like to have subcontractor representation on the IEC.

### **Panel Discussion**

A panel was assembled to understand some of the issues affecting the performance of the Ergonomics Program. The information gathered will be used together with other information and data to establish priorities for the Program.

The panel members discussed the following about the Ergonomics Program:

- The "As Is" state of the Program from their perspective;
- What is working well in the Program; and
- What work needs to be done to improve the Program.

Here are some of the highlights from that discussion:

- Workers Compensation injury and illness costs are as follows:

1997	81 injuries/illnesses	\$43,770
1998	113 injuries/illnesses	\$103,500
1999	100 injuries/illnesses	\$128,600

The above cases include 'ongoing' or carry-over cases from previous years. The costs reflect only medical expenses and disability payments. The following costs are not included: sick leave use, worker replacement, replacement worker training, lost productivity, program administration, and other costs.

**Suggested Action Item:** Quantify the cost of ergonomic injuries and illnesses.

- Recordable ergonomic conditions qualifying as an injury or illness are as follows:

1997	121 recordables
1998	64 recordables
1999	45 recordables

The 'ergonomic conditions' are defined as recordable according to 29 CFR 1904.

- The workers compensation and OSHA 200 databases are not linked as a management system. As such, they do not actively support management decision making related to compensation costs and injury/illness cases.

**Suggested Action Item:** There is a need for a database that integrates illness/injury cases to cost, organizational performance, and other factors important for decision making. Consider developing or buying a computer program/relational database to support management decision making.

- Ergonomic Evaluation Form: ESH-5 is developing a standard form that will be used to collect the minimum amount of required data. The data will be used for record keeping and trend analysis. The form will be available on the ergonomics web page.

- Tracking cases to closure: this topic focused on how to manage followup of ergonomic evaluations and hazard control recommendations to closure. Currently, this is not being done.
- **Suggested Action Item:** Determine how to track 'ergonomic cases' to closure. Consider a tracking database.
- How do we know if ergonomic training is being used by employees to reduce their risks?
- **Suggested Action Item:** A CSU graduate student is developing a survey to answer this question.
- **Suggested Action Item:** Consider developing a Lab-wide policy to assign portable office equipment (such as chairs) to individual employees.
- Employee reluctance to report ergonomic injuries or illnesses was discussed.
- The need to develop and emphasize a proactive ergonomics program was discussed.
- The need for management to send positive safety messages to employees was discussed in the context of employee fear of reporting injuries and illnesses.
- Lee McAtee discussed the current ESH Division restructuring work. He emphasized that the restructuring team is considering a variety of ideas to improve the delivery of services and to improve customer satisfaction. He emphasized that because the responsibility for safety resides with line management, the majority of resources should also reside with line management to implement requirements under the ISM umbrella.

A special session of the IEC is scheduled for February 23 at 3 p.m. The Committee will meet with Denny Erickson to discuss the work of the committee.